



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

June 23, 2020

OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chair, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair McCollum and Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Members Joyce and Udall:

Enclosed is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Report on the status of the Shaffer Equipment/Arbuckle Creek Area in Minden, West Virginia. The Explanatory Statement accompanying the *Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020* (Pub. L. 116-94) instructs agencies to follow guidance provided in House Report 116-100 and Senate Report 116-123 unless specifically otherwise addressed. Senate Report 116-123 states in relevant part:

PCB Contamination.—The Committee applauds the Agency's addition of Minden, West Virginia to the National Priorities List. The Committee encourages the Agency to report regularly to the West Virginia congressional delegation on the status of its efforts in Minden, including providing the delegation health assessment results and analysis after the completion of any testing, with a report within 90 days of enactment of this act.

The requested information is provided in the enclosure along with the February 2020 Shaffer Equipment Arbuckle Creek Superfund Site community update. Should you need additional information or have further questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Ed Walsh at walsh.ed@epa.gov or (202) 564-4594.

Sincerely,

DAVID
BLOOM

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Date: 2020.06.23
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David A. Bloom
Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Enclosures

Shaffer Equipment/Arbuckle Creek Area Site in Minden, West Virginia

Response to Senate Report 116–123

The Explanatory Statement accompanying the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Pub. L. 116-94) instructs agencies to follow guidance provided in House Report 116-100 and Senate Report 116-123 unless specifically otherwise addressed. Senate Report 116-123 directs EPA to submit a report on the status of the Shaffer Equipment/Arbuckle Creek Area Site in Minden, West Virginia, as follows:

PCB Contamination. —The Committee applauds the Agency’s addition of Minden, West Virginia to the National Priorities List. The Committee encourages the Agency to report regularly to the West Virginia congressional delegation on the status of its efforts in Minden, including providing the delegation health assessment results and analysis after the completion of any testing, with a report within 90 days of enactment of this act.

Background

Shaffer Equipment Company in Minden, West Virginia, manufactured heavy electrical equipment associated with coal mining. The facility used oil containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) in their products and failed to dispose of those products properly.

While cleanup actions have addressed the worst of the PCB contamination, the creek floods regularly, potentially depositing PCB-contaminated sediments onto residential yards adjacent to the creek as well as in wetlands and habitats known to be used by species that have been identified as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Low levels of contamination have been observed within the boundary of the New River Gorge National River, which is home to sensitive environments¹ and is used for recreation and fishing. In May 2019, EPA added the site to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL).

Actions Taken by EPA Since NPL listing

Since October 2019, EPA has been conducting on-site activities that include:

- Completing minor cap reinforcement and drainage repairs on a previously constructed remedy to address minor issues caused by erosion.
- Excavating surface soil in an area that had PCB concentrations above 50 ppm on the former Shaffer Equipment property. This activity and the above are being performed as part of a removal action.
 - The transportation and off-site disposal of the excavated soil was completed in February 2020.

¹ Sensitive environments include those environments described in the Federal Register Revised Hazard Ranking System (HRS) Final Rule 55 FR 51532 (<https://semspub.epa.gov/work/HQ/174028.pdf>) Table 4-23 Sensitive Environments, Table 5-5 Terrestrial Sensitive Environments, and wetlands as defined in 40 CFR 230.3. For example, it includes critical habitat as defined in 40 CFR 424.01 for Federal designated endangered or threatened species, Marine Sanctuary, National Park, Terrestrial habitat known to be used by State designated endangered or threatened species, State lands designated for wildlife or game management, etc.

- A remedial investigation also has been initiated, that includes sampling soil, sediment, and surface water in potential source areas along local waterways and on residential properties.
 - Results from this sampling are expected in Summer 2020.
- Performing ongoing community outreach and involvement activities, including mailing a fact sheet in October 2019 and conducting an open house on October 23, 2019, as well as an updated community update fact sheet in February 2020.

Please see the attached Shaffer Equipment Arbuckle Creek Superfund Site community update document for additional information.

Health Assessment

Please contact the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) / Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for information about the public health assessment activities for the Shaffer community. ATSDR has informed EPA that they are currently targeting the completion of their updated public health assessment report for the Shaffer site for Fall 2020.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 3
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Philadelphia, PA 19103

Postal Resident
Minden, WV 25879

Site Background

The Shaffer Equipment/Arbuckle Creek Area Site encompasses Shaffer Equipment Company property, Arbuckle Creek sediments, and other areas where site related contamination may be located. Site soils and sediment were historically contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which were used by the Shaffer Equipment Company from 1970 to 1984 to manufacture electrical substations for the local coal mining industry.

The company stored nonessential, damaged, or outdated transformers and capacitors on the Site property. Leaks from the equipment, possible spills, and dumping practices contributed to PCB contamination in on-site soils and washed into nearby Arbuckle Creek sediments. Low levels of contamination have also been observed in Arbuckle Creek within the boundary of the New River Gorge National River property. New River is home to sensitive environments and is also used for recreation and fishing.

For more detailed information and updates on activities at the Shaffer Equipment Arbuckle Creek Area Superfund Site, please visit:
www.epa.gov/superfund/shaffer

Sign up to receive site updates in your email box! Send a message to
R3_Shaffer@epa.gov

Contact Us

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SHAFFER EQUIPMENT/
ARBUCKLE CREEK AREA
SUPERFUND SITE
COMMUNITY UPDATE | FEBRUARY 2020

Site Timeline

Removal Program assessments	June 2017, December 2017, May 2019	✓
Sampling to inform possible National Priorities List inclusion	May 2018, June 2018	✓
Site proposed to National Priorities List	September 13, 2018	✓
Site added to the National Priorities List	May 15, 2019	✓
Site scoping visits	May 2019, October 2019	✓
Cap repair and drainage work began	November 2, 2019	✓
Remedial Investigation Phase I sampling began	November 4, 2019	✓
Removal excavation began at the Shaffer property	November 16, 2019	✓
Majority of Remedial Investigation Phase I sampling complete	December 12, 2019	✓
Removal action complete at the Shaffer property	February 21, 2020	✓
Sampling near confluence of New River and Arbuckle Creek (end of Phase I sampling)	March 2020	
Remedial Investigation sampling data analysis and evaluation	March - May 2020	
Community update: Findings and next steps	Summer 2020	

How can the community get involved?

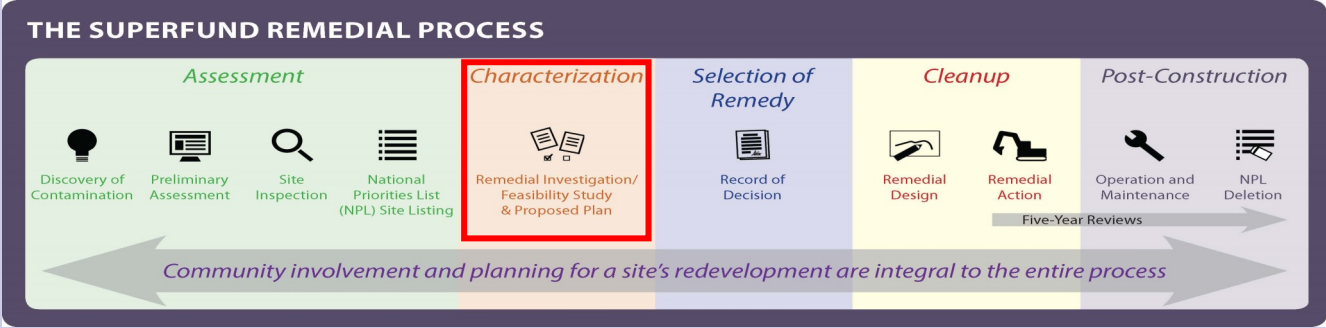


EPA has developed a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) or a roadmap to inform and engage with the community in the Superfund process at the Shaffer Equipment Arbuckle Creek Area Site. The information and action plan in the CIP is based on dialogue with and feedback from community members and stakeholders. To review the draft CIP, please visit www.epa.gov/superfund/shaffer. To provide input, please contact your Community Involvement Coordinator at 215-814-2746 or kennedy.cathleen@epa.gov

Want to receive regular updates in your email inbox? Questions about site work? Notice something new in your community?

Send an email to **R3_Shaffer@epa.gov** to subscribe to our email list!

What’s the status of the Remedial Investigation?



In May 2019, EPA added the site to the National Priorities List (NPL), commonly referred to as the Superfund list. The next step in the Superfund process is the Remedial Investigation (RI). The goals of the RI sampling are to characterize soil contamination, determine site related contaminants, and better characterize groundwater. This information will be used to determine if the site poses risks to human health and the environment. The initial list of contaminants that were sampled for include: polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), metals, pesticides, volatile organics, semi-volatile organics, and dioxins/furans.

Phase 1 sampling completed November - December 2019

- Former Shaffer Equipment property and adjoining areas - shallow and deep soil
- Occupied residential properties closest to Arbuckle Creek - soil (0-4 feet deep) and indoor PCB wipe samples
- Britt Bath House - shallow and deep soil
- Berwind Green Hill Mine Dump - shallow and deep soil
- Rocklick Road - shallow and deep soil
- NR&P Supply House area (also known as the Power House) - shallow and deep soil
- Arbuckle Creek and wetlands - surface water and sediment
- Other potential source areas and background locations - shallow and deep soil, surface water, and sediment



Soil sampling, November 2019

Next Steps

- Due to high water levels of the New River, sampling of surface water and sediment at downstream areas, near the confluence of Arbuckle Creek and the New River were postponed until water levels recede and the desired sampling locations can be accessed.
- The results from the Phase I sampling are expected to be received and evaluated by EPA during the March to May timeframe. Residential sampling results will be mailed to individual property owners. EPA will be available to discuss results with residents. Additional soil and groundwater sampling may be completed based on these results.
- EPA will provide a community update with results and the next steps in Summer 2020.

The community has asked...

Q: How will the community be kept informed of EPA’s work and progress?

A: EPA will continue our outreach efforts to keep the community updated on the work we are doing, both in the community and in the office. EPA will continue to host public meetings and open houses, for example the open house at Dr. Amjad’s office back in October 2019 prior to the start of the recent work. Fact sheets like this one will also be mailed to the community. Also, look for notices in your local newspapers.

What’s going on near the Shaffer Property?

At any time during the Superfund process, if the site is found to pose an immediate threat to public health or the environment, EPA can intervene with a removal action. Based on community input, the Removal Program conducted assessments from 2017-2019 throughout Minden and properties adjacent to the Shaffer Equipment Company property that were not previously assessed. Based on the results of those assessments, EPA chose to conduct a removal action, which included an area in need of excavation and minor repair of the capped area. The removal action began in November 2019 and was completed in February 2020.

Capped area

To repair the cap, soil was placed along the top of the sheet pile wall where minor surface erosion had been identified. Filter fabric and large stones were then placed on the soil to help prevent further erosion. Filter fabric and stones were also placed in front of the wall and in the floodplain to prevent erosion and sedimentation. Additionally, the drainage ditch to the east of the cap was regraded, and seasonal rye grass was planted in disturbed areas once the work was complete.



November 2019

Excavation and disposal

- Soil with PCB concentrations above 50 parts per million (ppm) was excavated from a small area, approximately 90 feet by 60 feet adjacent to the cap, and shipped offsite. Because of the level of PCB concentrations, this soil was shipped to a regulated hazardous waste disposal facility in Michigan. The maximum concentration identified during the removal site excavation sampling was around 215 ppm. It’s important to note the higher PCB concentrations were found in areas where there would have been limited human exposure.
- The water that accumulated in the excavated area was also sampled for PCBs to ensure it was not contaminated at levels that would require action. Given the low concentration, the water was pumped into a truck and shipped offsite for non-hazardous waste disposal.
- Excavation continued in the area adjacent to the cap to remove contaminated soil between 1 ppm and 50 ppm. Soil with PCB concentrations less than 50 ppm is considered non-hazardous waste so this soil was shipped offsite to a disposal facility in Kentucky.
- EPA determined that the excavation was complete when the concentration of PCBs in the soil were reduced to below 1 ppm. This was verified by conducting sampling during the excavation. Concentrations of less than 1 ppm in soil is an acceptable level for protecting public properties per the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).
- The areas impacted by the excavation were backfilled and seeded.



January 2020

The community has asked...

Q: Is relocation possible now that the site has been added to the National Priorities List?

A: To date, the environmental data collected, on site and in the community, does not show that residential relocation is an appropriate response action.